



Gaesdonck Parents' Letter

No. 7/2025-26

23 November 2025

Dear Gaesdonckers

After two truly eventful weeks, we are sending you Sunday greetings from Gaesdonck, a brief review of the past few days and a warm invitation to our next Studium Generale.

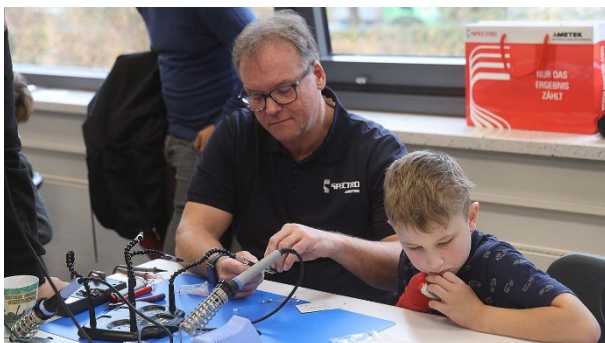
Open Day and Taster Day for the Day Boarding School 2025

Our Open Day last Saturday and the taster day for the day boarding school last Thursday were a resounding success. We cannot remember welcoming so many guests to the campus for this event in recent years. Not only were there numerous prospective students interested in the upcoming Sexta or transferring into later grades in our foyer, but we were also delighted to see many parents and alumni who took advantage of the Open Day to visit and catch up.

Special praise also goes to your children, our students, this year. They were wonderful hosts and presented the school in all its facets in a truly dignified manner. On both Saturday and Thursday, we received numerous comments from our guests about how attentive and courteous our students were. We are very proud of this – and you should be too.







St. Martin's Procession 2025



We enjoyed another wonderfully atmospheric evening the very next day at our traditional St. Martin's procession. Our Spiritual director, Sven Tönies, had much to be thankful for: the Orbis boarding school, which organised this year's St. Martin's play; the Uedem Youth Orchestra, which provided musical accompaniment for our procession again this year; our kitchen staff and craftsmen; our colleagues from the school and boarding school who accompanied their classes on the procession on Sunday evening, our scout troop, who went to great lengths to transform our marble square into an enchanting place, and many more who contributed to the success of the evening.



The fact that the drizzle stopped just in time for the parade added to the wonderful atmosphere. We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone involved!

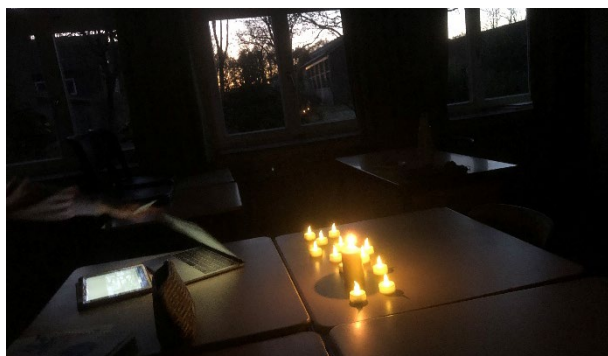




Advent and Christmas at Gaesdonck

Please note the information from our Spiritual director regarding Advent and Christmas at Gaesdonck in the appendix. This year, we would like to open up some special events that have developed from boarding school life in the past to external students as well, such as early morning services and the Liturgical Night. We look forward to hearing from anyone who is interested.

Consultation day



We were also very pleased with the excellent turnout and the many appointments booked for our consultation day last Friday.

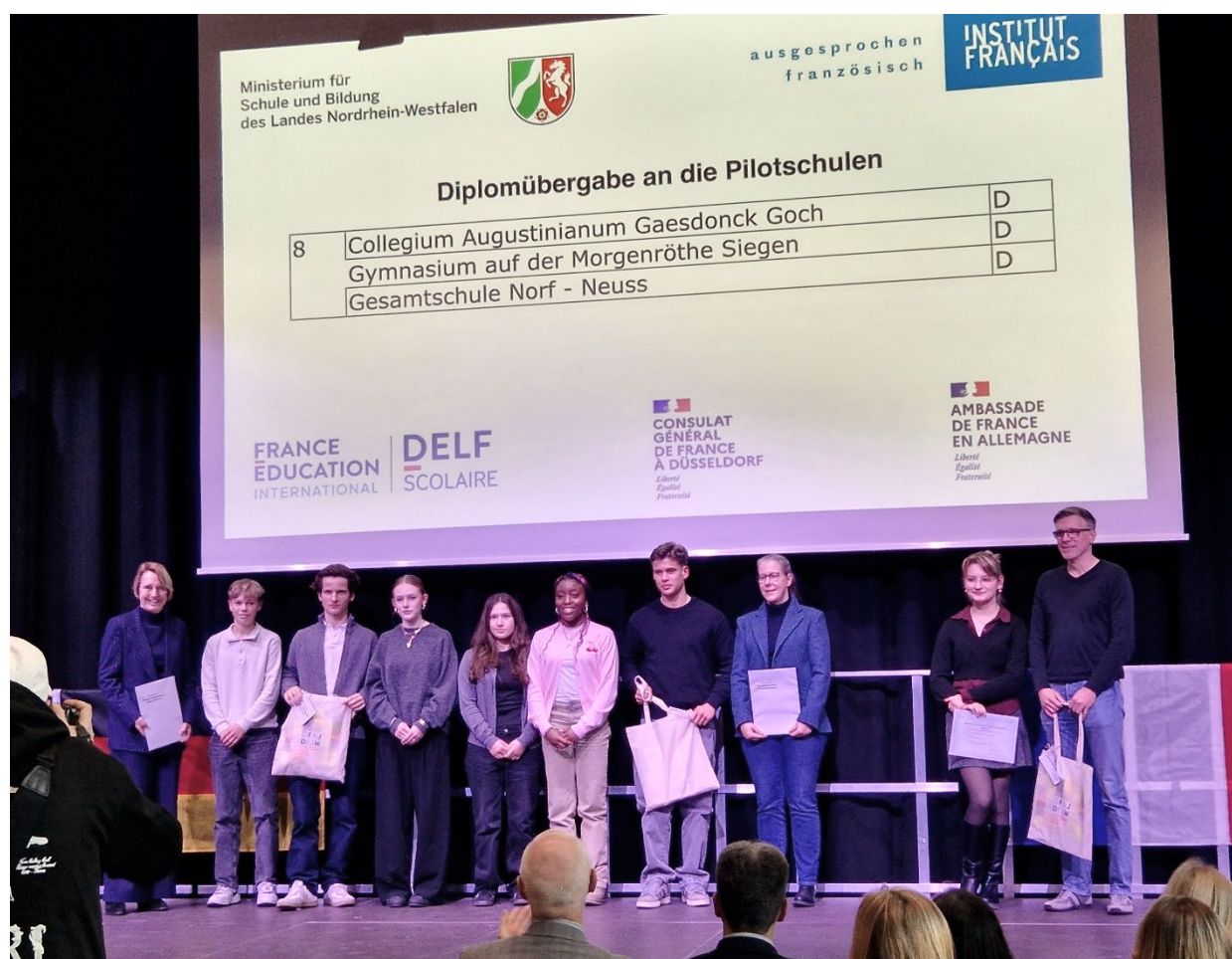
The fact that we had to conduct many of the appointments by candlelight due to a city-wide power outage was perhaps a slightly premature anticipation of the coming Advent season. In any case, it was a first in our school's history.

Awarding of DELF diplomas

On Saturday, our French teacher Ms Burdich and a group of students travelled to Düsseldorf, where they received their DELF diplomas at a ceremony attended by Minister of Education Ms Dorothee Feller and French Consul General Dr Etienne Sur.

Since the 2022/2023 school year, Gaesdonck has been one of the project schools in North Rhine-Westphalia that are authorised to offer the **DELF scolaire intégré** Level B1.

This is an achievement of which the students and their teacher can be equally proud. Further information will be available on our website shortly.



Reading competition in Year 6

Every year, the reading competition in Year 6 generates excitement and a visible competitive spirit. After all, all classes do their utmost to support the students competing for them.

Last Friday, the nationwide reading day, it was that time again: this year's finalists once again demonstrated an impressive love of reading and strong performances.

They recited wonderful texts of their own and also gave an excellent interpretation of the unprepared text "Wolf". This made the jury's decision difficult. **Emma Keunen** ultimately took first place! Congratulations from all of us.



Studium Generale: Artificial Intelligence – Opportunities and Risks



We are delighted to be able to present another high-profile guest speaker to our upper school students and their parents at our next Studium Generale on **Wednesday, 3 December at 7 p.m.**

Artificial intelligence – AI – is increasingly permeating all areas of our lives. This makes it all the more important to be aware of the opportunities and risks involved in order to make the right choices.

Together with the winter lecture programme of the German Atlantic Society and the Air Component Command at the German Armed Forces base in Kalkar-Kleve, we have succeeded in securing **Professor Patrick Glauner** from the Deggendorf Institute of Technology, a proven expert in the field of AI, as a speaker. In addition to his international teaching activities, Prof. Dr. Glauner has advised the parliaments of Germany, France and Luxembourg, among others, and is considered one of the world's leading data scientists.

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Professor Dr Glauner will share his views on the emerging ethical challenges in the application of artificial intelligence. As usual, there will be an opportunity for discussion in a relaxed atmosphere after the lecture.

You are cordially invited to this special evening. If you are interested, please register by the end of next week by emailing poststelle@gaesdonck.de.

We wish you and your families a wonderful Sunday. We wish the boarding school students a safe and pleasant journey home this evening despite the wintry weather.

Dr Markus Oberdörster
Director

Sabine Schleede-Schmalz
Headmistress

Michael Gysbers
Boarding School Director



Advent and Christmas at Gaesdonck

Advent morning services

This year, all boarding, day boarding and external students are invited to take part in the Advent morning services.

The services will take place at 7 a.m. in the crypt.

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| • Tuesday, 2 December | Registration deadline: Friday, 28 November |
| • Tuesday, 9 December | Registration deadline: Friday, 5 December |
| • Tuesday, 16 December | Registration deadline: Friday, 12 December |

The early morning sessions last about 15 minutes. Afterwards, there is a free breakfast together in the cafeteria.

This year's theme is **"Everything from the beginning"** with a focus on starting, persevering and arriving. Each morning session includes a short reflection and a small activity.

In order for us to plan for breakfast in particular, registration is required to participate. The registration lists are posted in the glass case in the cloister and must be filled out by 8:00 a.m. on the Friday before each session. As every year, boarding school students are expected to participate in at least one morning session.

Liturgical Night – "Magical Moments"

On **Saturday, 13 December**, this year's Liturgical Night will take place at Gaesdonck under the motto "Magical Moments". This evening invites students to come together in the special atmosphere of Advent to relax, get creative and get in the mood for Christmas.

The schedule for the evening

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| • 9 p.m.: | Joint reflection in the monastery church to kick off the evening |
| • Approx. 9.30 p.m.: | Start of workshops |
| • 11.30 p.m.: | Eucharistic celebration, incorporating elements from the workshops |
| • Followed by: | Open conclusion in the house |

This year, the workshops are being offered by teachers and boarding school educators and cover a wide variety of topics – creative, musical, athletic, meditative and much more.

Registration for the workshops will take place on 11 and 12 December via the registration lists in the glass case in the cloister.

Participation is open to boarding, day boarding and external students.

For external students, the event ends at 1:00 a.m. Boarding school students may participate in the closing activities in the houses for longer, subject to the usual regulations.

We look forward to an atmospheric and enriching Advent night.

Christmas Eve at Gaesdonck

On Christmas Eve, we cordially invite you to **Christmas Mass at 5 p.m.** in the monastery church of Gaesdonck. Together, we would like to begin Christmas celebrations with a festive and atmospheric liturgy.

Altar servers are welcome and are asked to contact me by 10 December.

A rehearsal date will then be agreed upon with the altar servers.

I look forward to seeing you and the students in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Sven Tönies
Spiritual Director